

# UPSTAIRS BULLETIN

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## LAZINESS.

Of all the passions, the one about which we ourselves know the least is laziness, the fiercest and the most evil of them all, though its violence goes unperceived and the havoc it causes lies hidden. The repose of laziness has a secret charm for the soul, suddenly suspending its more ardent pursuits and the most obstinate resolutions. To give, in fine, some idea of this passion, it should be said that laziness is like a state of beatitude, in which the soul is consoled for all its losses and which stands in lieu to it of all its possessions.

- La Rochefoucauld.

## "IS IT REALLY WORTH IT?"

Saturday is a long and grueling day in a Ballet School - at least it is in ours. Checking in at 8 A.M. and continuous work until 6 P.M. Today, May 27th, was our 36th day of Saturday classes since September and is it any wonder one asks - "Is it really worth it? There must be an easier way to make a living."

The day begins with a beginner class of teen age girls and a group of young men and boys - all starting too late but as I began late myself I never discourage a boy up to 24 years of age. So much depends on their determination - will power - physical attributes and their ability to withstand deprivation and discouragement. Some use dance to enhance acting or singing talents - some for physical reasons and all are attracted to it for its glamour and exhibitiv possibilities. Some of these young men do accomplish something and for the one who does - the effort is worth while.

The poor physical education these young people get in the schools is a real detriment to the dance teacher.

This class is followed by the Baby class - sometimes a great pleasure to teach but now and then a real battle. So few children come to us today with any sort of home discipline and the Ballet teacher is expected to produce it. This years crop was an especially hard group, but now in the fifth term after many harrowing Saturday sessions improvement can be seen. Lengthening the attention span is the great problem and when you begin to think you have their complete attention out comes little Nicole Walder with a remark - "You know what Mr. Camryn, my Daddy is still in bed". Or from Saroya - "Our cat just had six babies". A few weeks back after a particularly hard session little Marion Walker spoke out - "Mr. Camryn I think you need a vacation." She couldn't have been more right.

At eleven Mr. Stone's class, my second year students of last year, with his precise and demanding approach is a beautiful unified class by the end of the year. By this time the class has learned to respect discipline and there is no longer a need for any 'police action'. The pupils have the beautiful example of Victoria Peluchewski and Ines Laimins to demonstrate and set an example of perfection.

For those who aspire to be a Pointe there is a half hour class at 12:30 where we give the first rudiments and today Dolores Lipinski is their teacher. There are those who are blessed with feet that spring to a beautiful position and there

are many more in the beginning who look as if they were hanging on by their toe nails.

Arriving early for their ballet class at 1 o'clock, Jon Vaver age 11 and Anthony age 12, cornered me for some conversation on music and their school work. This reminded me of another John in the past - John Sharp of the 40's, who always arrived early for a half hour talk with teacher. Those talks were memorable and often amazing. His father once said to me that he wished he could talk to his son as easily as I could. All one really has to do is listen and ply them with an occasional question. Jon Vaver really does not need the questions. Needless to say Jon and Tony are all one could wish for in the classroom.

The 11 o'clock class is where 'talent' begins to show. By this time one can see an interest take hold and with now and then a flare that indicates a talented future. It can be a stance with a turn of the head - a quality in an arm movement - some thought transferred with a smile when something is done well - the added energy put into an exercise after some encouragement - and often it can be some silent communication between the student and the teacher. Certainly Christine Jarolim has been having a spurt of progress and attention is being brought to her. Jamie Johnson and Therese Colby are close runners up.

Children from the 11 o'clock and the 1 o'clock classes make up the Character class where they are made aware of all movement that the human body is capable of. They are allowed to give a certain amount of individuality of their own as long as it is within the bounds of what was given. In the character class we often discover those with mimetic talents - those with a natural gift for movement - those with a talent for characterization and most especially those with an original way of saying something in the language of dance. One might say that in this class we separate the

natural gifted dancers from those who become trained dancers.

By now, it is 3:30 in the afternoon and there is an advanced intermediate ballet class under Mr. Stone. This class harbors some of the talent showing the most promise. Most of them were in last year's 11 o'clock class and improved enough to be 'pushed on'. Like a frightened deer, slim Sheila Furcich spins through some rather exciting pirouettes to end (now and then) on fantastic balance. Donna Kamowski (who reminds me of Dolores when about the same age) dreadfully shy - age 13 - (what else?) but when she does give in to a smile could win anyone's heart. Ann\*Tina Levine with a talent for honest laughter adds another quality to dance. They are only three, there are others that you toss back and forth in the back of your mind - "Is it really worth it?" And rather submissively you admit it must be - because why would one plug away at it for over fifty years?

After the 3:30 class is an hour Points class which today will be taught by Lipinski because Marion Harvey has offered to drive us out to Batavia, Illinois to see a concert by Naomi Sorkin and Laurence Rhodes. Naomi was our student for six years and in many of our Ballet programs including the ballets - "A Friend is Someone Who Likes You" - "For The Birds" - "Froglicher Reigen" and "A Sense of Wonder". This program watching Naomi's beautiful dancing with her impeccable foot and arm work - her strength and musicality is enough to make any other young dancer envious. Summed up emphatically it makes those 51 years of teaching worth while - and then some. Two solo dances arranged for her by Margo Sappington and Anna Sokolov revealed her true worth as an artist in dance.

Actually when we sit down and think we have many proofs that our labor was not in vain. If we hadn't had Kelly Brown as a pupil to guide there wouldn't have been a Leslie Browne to startle film

audiences. If we hadn't had John Neumeier over a period of four years in classes and some very special programs his life might have been a very different one. If we hadn't had Peggy Lyman as a child in many summer courses from Cincinnati she might never have danced with Martha Graham.

After 51 years something has to happen to make you want to go on - despite all the physical difficulties - is it that eager smile from Jon and Tony - is it Sheila's straight turns or trying to get that smile out of Donna Kamowski?

SURPRISE VISITS are always welcome and there have been many of late - MARY FORMOLA in for a week from Regina, Saskatchewan where she has been having an intensely interesting schedule of teaching and dancing. JUNE DUNAWAY now a college graduate and married in from Texas - more beautiful than ever - remember her in "A Sense of Wonder"? A nice long visit with WILLIAM COUNTS who now travels mostly for Dunn and Bradstreet. In for the concerts - TRACEY HUNTLEY from Phoenix, now back in College - SHEILA & MINNIE REILLY from Milwaukee - OLGA DI NUNZIO from the Federal Theatre days - JOHN SHARP in from New York with his parents - YVONNE BROWN with her band of students. KEVIN PETERMAN was dancing with the Les Grand Ballets Canadiennes - an excellent program - one of the best to visit us this year. Brother BRIAN flew in from Vancouver for the program and to visit with us - he is a big business man these days and doing great. DARLENE CALLAGHAN was one of five dancers flown in from New York to prop up Maria Tallchief's Lyric school effort. Darlene is dancing extremely well - she was an excellent dancer when she left SC. Wonderful to see LAUREN ROUSE home and in class again. She is very happy with the Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre. VANNESSA MERIA wrote from Lubeck, Germany that she is recovering from a broken foot - right after signing a principle contract for next season. Luncheon with JOAN STONE and ARTHA GRUHL (Artha was our first to go to

the Royal in London) she now writes. In August RAY CHAPPATTA leaves to be an apprentice in the Stuttgart Ballet in that city. CAROLYN COWIE is now in New York and ADAM HEILMANN will be dancing in Denver for three months before he hits that city. JOHN DENNIS and WILL LAUX hope to be hanging their hats in Texas this fall. For the records - In Ruth Page's book - she or John Martin give her the credit for the choreography of a performance of the "Opera Carmen" in Soldiers Field in August 1942 - I just happened to be the choreographer and RUTH PRYOR was my partner. I have the payroll stub to prove it and incidentally CHARLES BOCKMAN was in the same performance.

#### ALWAYS ON SUNDAY.

For many years in the past, Sundays have been set aside in the school for rehearsals - days when we create our programs. There never seems to be a time during the week when the group can gather - because of demanding school schedules - distances to cover and time to get there - (John Neumeier came from Milwaukee for these rehearsals) and our own busy teaching schedules. These Sunday gatherings became a ritual and were missed when they ceased at the end of the year. These past few years there has only been an occasional program beside the three day "run" at St. Alphonsus. In 1952 we danced in the neighborhood of 60 performances. That was a tour year covering eight states and the following summer a Chatauqua tour. Since, the school has gotten more demanding and we limit it to 5 or 6 a season - but using many more dancers.

Out of these "Always on Sundays" rehearsals many accomplished dancers have been developed, so that, when they leave Chicago they go with some performing experience. This probably accounts for why most of them have fallen into solo and principle roles sooner than most. Dancers from these programs have later danced in Musicals, Opera and many



of the major Ballet Companies of the United States and Europe. Many from earlier programs are now Directors, Choreographers, have University positions or own their own schools.

Each year we more or less start from scratch with new talent, especially at the soloist level. This year was no exception but after thirty Sundays of hard and demanding work we arrived at a pretty cohesive group - with a few unexpected surprises and no real failures. Watching from the wings it is difficult to judge precision in steps but in the photographs taken by Roberta Caliger it appears like a well high perfect performance. Being perfect in precision and time is not all important (but nice when one gets it) but the expressiveness of the dancers means more. I never did go along with the Balanchine type face - drawn - white and woe begone - completely devoid of expression.

Each of the four Ballets had their own success. Mr. Stone's extended "Party Play" of last season began the program with bright vitality and its audience responded in the same happy spirit. The two Pas de deux danced by Heide Hamilton and Adam Heilmann (formerly Hank Adams) were danced with polish and wit. The group romped through the ballet with humor and abandon to a happy conclusion. The young group in "Cumberland Gap Suite" lead by Victoria Peluchewski, Joan Gregor and Will Laux brought many new faces on stage. Tracey Morgan's "Swanee" lead into a free-for-all finale delighting the audience to a rousing reception. "Capriccioso" an extremely difficult Classical ballet came off in grand style. It was a ballet that would be very difficult to get a professional group to do - however the soloists, Laimins, Heilmann, Peluchewski, Chappatta, Cowie and Dennis did a superb job. Stone's "Celebration" is always a joy to see and experience, for it is truly a Celebration of just about everything we stand for in this land of ours.

We will be fortunate next year in having Ines Laimins, Victoria Peluchewski and Joan Gregor. We will miss Adam Heilmann, Carolyn Cowie, John Dennis and Heide Hamilton who are off on their own now. Not to be completely discouraged there are always those in the background who react to the fact that they might be the next in line. There is always that unknown quantity or quality that comes through which always makes our programs a miracle as far as we are concerned.

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